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SUBJECT: KENYA -- 2009 AGOA FORUM UPDATE

REFS: (A) NAIROBI 2594 (B) STATE 114398
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12. Summary. Pending confirmation from the Office of the President, Kenya is now likely to propose hosting the 2009 AGOA Forum in Nairobi during the August 3-7 timeframe versus the originally proposed timeframe of August 9-14. The preferred venue remains the Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC) in downtown Nairobi. Ministry of Trade (MOT) Secretary for External Trade Simon Chacha Nyangi, the chair of Kenya's 2009 AGOA Forum national organizing committee, told US Mission representatives on December 18 that he expects the Office of the Presidency to approve the dates and venue by December 19. As soon as we have written confirmation of the Kenyan proposal, we will forward for Washington concurrence. End Summary.

13. The Government of Kenya (GOK) has begun its preparations for the 2009 AGOA Forum in earnest. On December 18, the GOK's 2009 AGOA Forum Main Preparatory Committee held its fifth session, four of which have included representatives of the U.S. Mission. It will hold its next session on January 15, 2009. The main preparatory committee has also set up multiple subcommittees: conference and accreditation; hospitality, protocol and accommodation; private sector; publicity; civil society; technical (substantive program), transport, security and finance. U.S. Mission members have been assigned to and are working with virtually all of the AGOA subcommittees.

Different Time, Same Station

14. Chaired by Kenyan Ministry of Trade (MOT) Secretary for External Trade Simon Chacha Nyangi, the main committee resolved in its November 26 and December 10 sessions to recommend to President Mwai Kibaki and his Cabinet that Kenya host the 2009 AGOA Forum between August 3-7 versus the dates, August 9-14, originally proposed (ref A). Chacha reiterated that the forum would be held at the Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC) located in downtown Nairobi. KICC committee representative Bernard Asoro said the conference center has been reserved for the August 3-7 timeframe.

15. During December 10 and December 18 main preparatory meetings, Chacha told committee attendees that his ministry expects the Office of the Presidency to approve the date and venue by December 19. (Note: US Mission RSO, MGT, and GSO personnel have already carefully surveyed the KICC and the nearby Intercontinental Hotel, where we propose to block rooms for the official USG delegation. MGT and GSO have also reviewed facilities and the availability of rooms at other hotels convenient to the KICC.)

Progress on Joint Statement

16. The GOK's AGOA publicity subcommittee is coordinating with U.S. Mission Kenya PAO on the drafting and timing of a formal joint statement announcing the forum. We reminded the Kenyans that the embassy would first have to get USG concurrence on the statement's wording before it could be released, preferably by mid-January. Current thinking is that the announcement would be accompanied by a joint press conference in Nairobi hosted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade Uhuru Kenyatta and Ambassador Ranneberger. Following the publicity subcommittee's report, the general committee resolved to have the forum's website on line by December 15, but it now appears that the government will not have the website running before mid-January.

Theme and Program Suggestions

17. The 2009 AGOA Forum technical subcommittee, charged with the forum's program, has come up with the following proposal for the Forum's theme: AGOA 8 Years On: Bridging the Gap to Realize Its Full Potential. The Main Committee has not yet signed off on this suggestion and we welcome Washington input as this process continues.

18. The technical subcommittee, led by MOT Commercial Officer Lina Ochieng, also outlined 10 prospective topics for break-out sessions:

- Agriculture: Value Addition and Branding (agro-processing), and Investment Opportunities in Agri-business
- Textiles: Category 9, Vertical Integration, and AGOA Challenges (e.g. third country fabric, safeguard measures)
- SME Programs
- Infrastructure: Transport - road, rail, airport, port and ICT
- Finance: Sources of Finance
- Private Investment: Alternative Sources of Energy, Private-Public Partnership, and Conducive Investment Environment
- Contemporary Global Challenges: Global Warming, Security (bio-terrorism, piracy), Health (AIDS, malaria), Global Recession
- Market Development: Product/Regional Promotion, Product Development
- Regulatory Regimes: Quality Standards, SPS
- Technical Assistance: Technology

19. Ochieng assured participants that, in addition to the USG, the GOK will solicit input from African governments and resident missions as it crafts the forum's theme and agenda. In terms of the overall program for the Forum, Ochieng envisions Kenya chairing the Africa consultations on day one, followed by the ministerial on day two, then the private sector and civil society events on day three. Kenya is contemplating holding a March 2009 pre-ministerial of African participants to prepare for the forum.

Security Preparations Underway

¶10. Security subcommittee chairman Henry Barmao representing the Commissioner of Police reassured everyone that the security forces will be well prepared for all contingencies. He commented favorably that the police force already enjoys a close working relationship with US Embassy RSO. Embassy security officers have begun participating in this subcommittee.

Private Sector Participation

¶11. Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) assistant executive officer Joseph Wairiuko cited the numerous trade organizations, including the American Chamber of Commerce of Kenya (ACCK), now part of the private sector subcommittee (FCS SCO, USAID and ECON are also members). Wairiuko and representatives of Kenya's Export Promotion Council and Export Processing Zones Authority discussed various ways of involving local businesses, notably Kenya Airways, in getting the word out about the forum. We recommended that the subcommittee likewise reach out to Delta Airlines and the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA; we have subsequently included preparatory committee leaders in an email to CCA establishing contact). Referring to recent trade delegations from Dallas, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, and Miami, we reminded general committee members not to overlook Nairobi's Sister Cities as another vehicle to recruit private sector participation. US Mission officers also encouraged the private sector subcommittee to develop contacts with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the USA-Kenya Chamber of Commerce based in Philadelphia, the African Chamber of Commerce DFW, the USAID-supported Kenya

Horticulture Development Program, Fintrac, the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK), and other trade promotion agencies.

¶12. Wairiuko said his subcommittee would craft a website targeting the private sector. Emboffs passed the message from the USG DC AGOA interagency committee that forum registration documents should be easily accessed, completed, and submitted. We reiterated our view that post-forum events, such as pre-packaged trips to the world famous game reserve at Maasai Mara or Lake Nakuru National Park, ought to be advertised on the forum website to increase attendance and generate tourism. The Kenyans already are planning a "bush dinner" for the expected 1,000 participants at Nairobi National Park.

¶13. Wairiuko added that the private sector subcommittee envisions cutting off registrations in May. This generated considerable, unresolved debate on a general registration deadline. Several argued for a lenient one, stretching into mid-July, with fees calibrated along "early bird" (\$150), before the deadline, and after the deadline.

Budget Deliberations

¶14. At the December 10 preparatory meeting, Chacha led a line-by-line evaluation of budgetary requests made by all the subcommittees, except for security. Considerable slashing was done, especially of requests submitted by the transportation, publicity, and civil society subcommittees. Chacha instructed the technical subcommittee to scrub all subcommittee budget projections and provide an acceptable overall budget for review and approval on December 18. At the December 18 meeting, the main preparatory committee tentatively approved a budget of nearly 135 million shillings (about \$1.75 million), subject to funding restraints.

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